


CCSM PINE TREE

VOL. 69, #6 | FALL 2020 • ONLINE / THIRD SHELTER-IN-PLACE EDITION



**Retelling
GENESIS:
wisdom for
these times**

**FALL SERMON
SERIES 2020**
Sunday service
streaming on
Facebook at
10:30am

SUNDAY WORSHIP: *RETELLING GENESIS*

- Oct. 4 Jim Antal (guest preacher)
- Oct. 11 Laura Keating: *Sarah and Hagar*
- Oct. 18 Penny Nixon: *Limping our Way Along*
- Oct. 25 Jorge Perry Bautista preaching
- Nov. 1 Penny Nixon: All Saints Day

SECOND HOUR IS BACK!

Second Hour Sundays
bring important
topics for learning and
discussion following
the Sunday service.
Now on ZOOM!



See **PAGE 3**
for details.

Click [here](#) or on the video to hear Penny give a short reflection on our current moment—six months into this pandemic—sharing her concerns, gratitudes, and hopes.

[tinyurl.com/Penny-PT6]



Congregational
Church of san mateo

225 TILTON AVENUE, SAN MATEO, CA 94401
650 343-3694 | CCSM-UCC.ORG | FACEBOOK.COM/CCSM.UCC

CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

youth news...

This fall is off to a strong, if different, start for children, youth, and families at CCSM! On Sunday, September 13 we had a Homecoming/Home-staying celebration! We had music and dance for kids led by Julie Berk, we had an online game time playing Pictionary together, and we had a great turnout of over 20 youth to bake together (we mailed cake mix and icing to each of the youth!) while we got caught up and started off the year. It was delicious and so wonderful to see folks again after the summer.

This year we have a lot of great programs on the docket. We continue to have Godly Play led by Shannon each Sunday morning, featuring Bible stories, wondering questions, and artistic and creative responses. Libby is launching a new Justice and Resilience program, focused on the connections between faith and social justice and also developing personal resilience for kids in these difficult times. We are grateful to the families who filled in our surveys to help shape our programming in ways that most directly meet your needs and hopes!

We are also grateful to Julie Berk for offering a monthly family music program! **Join us on the first Sunday of the month at 9:45am for music and movement for all ages on Zoom.** This is a great chance to learn some songs with spiritual themes that you can sing as a family all throughout the week.

We continue to reach out to our Wednesday gathering kids and youth in a variety of ways, but one of the most successful has been through monthly care packages facilitated by Colleen. We have been offering craft kits, activity books, school supplies, and a variety of other fun things. A favorite item as of late were noise cancelling headphones—very helpful for online schooling. These kids and youth are such an important part of our community and we are glad to have found ways to keep in touch.

For youth, we have had a wonderful program this summer than we are continuing into the fall. We have brought in a variety of young adult guest speakers to share about their faith journeys, their church or religious upbringings, the places in the world they have lived, their commitments to justice and community service, and so much more. The youth have asked wonderful questions and we have really built some great relationships! We are so lucky at CCSM to have such a diverse group of caring young adults and thoughtful and inquisitive youth!

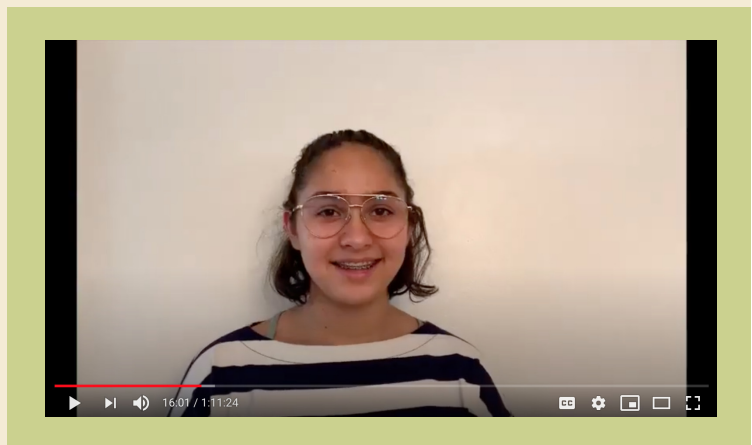
Click here for our [RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES](#) page to find lots of activities and ideas!

We have also continued to have a variety of social and community-building programs for youth. These have included a really fun civics game where you can run a mock presidential campaign, movie and text conversation nights, and other creative ways to keep in touch. We have also participated in some wider church events such as virtual campfires and reunions for Camp Cazadero and National UCC Online Youth Events!

Speaking of connecting with other churches, one thing I am very excited about is a joint Confirmation program for high school aged youth that we are participating in with the UCC Churches in Danville and Berkeley. This is a great chance for youth to meet others and to explore their faith. We will be gathering virtually on Sunday afternoons and youth will also connect with mentors and be involved in their home churches in a variety of ways. This is a great opportunity, facilitated in part by the pandemic!

We are grateful to have Laura Keating-Clevidence continuing to work with youth during her internship at CCSM and also grateful for Lily, our wonderful childcare provider who continues to reach out to our littlest kids through the mail. I have continued to send mail to all of our kids periodically, including a special back-to-school blessing. This is a great way to connect without screens and I appreciate all of the letters and crafts I have received back in the mail. I love having so many penpals!

This is a strange season but I am so grateful to each of our kids, youth, parents, and leaders for their flexibility and willingness to try things out in new and different ways.



Megan welcomes the congregation during the 09-20-2020 worship service

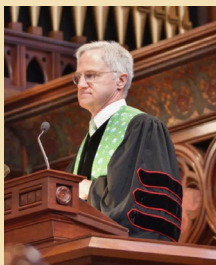
SECOND HOUR NOW ON ZOOM!



[Click HERE for Zoom link](#)

Second Hour Sundays have returned and will meet at 12:00 noon following the worship service. You won't want to miss these important conversations:

OCTOBER 4: Rev. Jim Antal *God's Call – Our Vocation – In a Time of Climate Chaos*



What's the latest on the greatest moral crisis humanity has ever faced, and what are some promising initiatives? How might the local church embrace this vocation in a way that addresses the relationship between racial, economic and climate injustice? How might we change

the story we are living so that our lives are a testimony to the preservation of God's creation?

Jim Antal is a denominational leader, climate activist, author and public theologian. He serves as Special Advisor on Climate Justice to the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. An environmental activist from the first Earth Day in 1970, in 2017 Antal authored a resolution declaring a new moral era in opposition to President Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord. He is the author of CLIMATE CHURCH, CLIMATE WORLD.

jimantal.com/bio

OCTOBER 11: Robby Jones *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*



His presentation, based on his new book, *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*, will document how white Christians—from evangelicals in the South to mainline Protestants in the Midwest and Catholics in

the Northeast—have not just been complacent or complicit; rather, as the dominant cultural power, they have constructed and sustained a project of protecting white supremacy and opposing black equality that has framed the entire American story. Drawing on lessons gleaned from case studies of

communities beginning to face these challenges, Dr. Jones will argue that contemporary white Christians must confront these unsettling truths because this is the only way to salvage the integrity of their faith and their own identities. For the sake of themselves and the nation, he urges white Christians to reckon with this legacy.

*Robert P. Jones is the CEO and founder of [Public Religion Research Institute](#) (PRRI) and the author of *White Too Long: The Legacy of White Supremacy in American Christianity*. Jones writes regularly on politics, culture, and religion for The Atlantic online, NBC Think, and other outlets. He is frequently featured in major national media, such as CNN, MSNBC, NPR, The New York Times, The Washington Post, and others. He holds a Ph.D. in religion from Emory University and a M.Div. from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He also authored *The End of White Christian America*.*

OCTOBER 18: Penny Nixon *Religion and Politics: Finding Our Way*



How do use a "faith frame" when we make our decisions about voting? What might that look like? How do try and untangle the often unhealthy relationship between religion and politics in America?

OCTOBER 25: Martyn Whittock *Trump and the Puritans: exploring the deep historical roots of the support for Donald Trump among US evangelicals*



Many people are puzzled at the strong support for Donald Trump by US evangelicals. The answer largely lies in the deep history and mythology of the modern USA, which stretches back to its 17th-century roots. Although the current polarization in US politics

is related to "culture wars" that have accelerated since the late 1960s, the roots lie much deeper. What is rapidly becoming a "battle for the soul of America" has its origins in contested ideas of what constitutes America itself.

Martyn Whittock graduated in Politics from Bristol University, UK, in 1980, where his degree special

SECOND HOUR (CONT.)

studies were in radical Christian politics and theology of the 17th century, and also the development of the Soviet State. He also studied US politics. He taught high school history for thirty-five years and developed an interest in early medieval history (especially Anglo-Saxons and Vikings). He has acted as an historical consultant to the National Trust, the BBC and English Heritage. He is a Licensed Lay Minister in the Church of England and is the author or co-author of fifty books, most recently *Mayflower Lives* (2019), *Trump and the Puritans* (2020) and *The Secret History of Soviet Russia's Police State* (2020). Find his recent article in Christian Today [here](#).

NOVEMBER 1: Preparing ourselves for the turbulent week to come with the election on Tuesday.

NOVEMBER 8: What's next? Join Penny to talk about the events of election week...

NOVEMBER 15: Suzanne Verge Anti-gun-violence presentation



Suzanne is President of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Brady United to Prevent Gun Violence. Suzanne became an activist during the Million Mom March on Mother's Day 2000 in Washington, DC, where she traveled to be the voice for her brother who had been murdered in 1978. Some of the highlights of her activism include driving the infamous pink RV across

the country for the "Halt the Assault tour," organizing a "Lie In" at UCLA to remember the 32 VA Tech victims as well as taking her children lobbying in Sacramento and Washington, DC.

She received the 2009 Sarah Brady Visionary Award and the 2005 Woman of the Year award for the 41st Assembly District from the Honorable Fran Pavley.

NOVEMBER 22: Zoe Mullery "Coronapocalypse": Stories from San Quentin's Coronavirus Lockdown



CCSM's Administrative Assistant, Zoe Mullery, also teaches creative writing at San Quentin State Prison through a program called the Prison Arts Project. The egregious treatment of her students during shelter-in-place has been a dreadful expansion of the usual harsh conditions in our state's prisons. While all classes and visits have been halted for months, Zoe has been able to pass written lessons and receive assignments through the institutional mail system. She will share some of her students' stories and a brief introduction to the moral, financial, and humanitarian crisis in our prisons. (The average cost per person incarcerated in California is \$84,848 per year and the prison budget comprises 7.6% of California's total budget.) Come hear stories straight from those in the midst of this crisis.

Zoe Mullery has been teaching creative writing in California's prisons since 1997, and has edited more than twelve anthologies of her students' work. Check out a blog about her class at brothersinpen.wordpress.com.

Update on Pick-a-Party 2020



Due to concerns about transmission of COVID-19, Pick-a-Party is postponed until it is safe to come together again. However, Lisa Mallette and Julie Lenden are looking into forming a committee to implement a **re-imagined fundraiser**, which would occur in 2021 if there is interest. This fundraiser would include a virtual silent auction, where people bid on creative items such as art pieces, vacation home getaways, specialized homemade baked goods, etc. Other items members would be asked to donate include community building events such as virtual cooking classes, dance classes, music lessons, and special interest talks. With all of the talent in the congregation, the opportunities are truly endless! What a great opportunity not only to fundraise, but to also virtually meet up with folks you may not have seen since this all started.

In order to pull it off, we're looking to create a **volunteer committee** to help input donations into an online software system, gather and distribute donations, write communications pieces, etc. Please contact Julie Lenden at julielenden@hotmail.com or 650-454-0461 if you'd like to help make this idea a reality. Thank you!



Photo: Chris Yeh

Dismantling Segregation in San Mateo

Conversation with Richard Rothstein & North Central Leaders

Wednesday, October 7th 10AM

Click [HERE](#) for the Facebook Event Link

HOSTED BY THE HOUSING LEADERSHIP COUNCIL, ONE SAN MATEO, URBAN HABITAT, NAACP SAN MATEO



Richard Rothstein
AUTHOR, COLOR OF LAW

Alexis Lewis
EXECUTIVE MEMBER
NAACP SAN MATEO

Gloria Brown
FOUNDER BAY AREA
COMMUNITY HEALTH
ADVISORY COUNCIL

Tony Samara
PROGRAM DIRECTOR
URBAN HABITAT

In the Bay Area, segregation is worse now than in the 1970s. Come to our virtual event to learn how to fix this.

Moderator: **Tony Samara**. Panelists: **Richard Rothstein, Gloria Brown, Alexis Lewis**.

Go to tinyurl.com/DismantlingSegregation for event registration and information.

GUIDELINES FOR FACEBOOK CHAT DURING WORSHIP

At CCSM, we come together to support each other as we seek connection with God through fellowship. In our new online presence, fellowship is perhaps more important than ever. We want to continue our practice of extending an extravagant welcome to all. One of the ways we do that is in the Facebook chat feature on Sunday mornings. As with all online platforms, though, there are challenges and opportunities. In an effort to navigate those challenges, the staff is adopting the following guidelines:

- 1) We endeavor to re-create as near as possible a face-to-face experience within the virtual setting. With that in mind, we (the staff) greet people when they enter the chat as we would during an in-person worship service. Once the service begins, we will greet people only as part of the larger congregation and not individually.
- 2) Our two moderators will be Chase and Rev. Sheryl. They have been tasked with being primarily responsible for ensuring that all feel welcome and are greeted, prior to the beginning of the service. For the most part, as it would be in-person, the rest of the ministers and staff are not greetings people as they enter into the chat, as clergy are focused on the service itself. Please do not feel slighted if you are not greeted individually. Feel free to greet each other until the service begins.
- 3) In these charged times, with many stressors presented to us as a community, a nation and in the world, we strive to reflect our values of championing social justice for all. We ask that, to the extent possible, political comments not be partisan.
- 4) As in an in-person service, we ask that comments be limited during scripture reading, sermons, and other content where the congregation would normally be silent.
- 5) During prayer time, as it would be if we were gathered in church, please do share your prayer concerns in the chat. We try to capture that and respond to you after the service, as well as pray for you at staff meeting on Monday and throughout the week.
- 6) Comments can feel distracting to some people. If your preference is to not see comments at all, you can choose the option to **HIDE COMMENTS** at the top/right of the chat. (see example ►)

Thank you for your wonderful spirit of participation and patience with the staff and with one another as we navigate these unprecedented times!

September 20, 2020 - CCSM Online Service - Retelling Genesi...

September 20, 2020 - CCSM Online Service - Retelling Genesis: Jacob's Ladder...

See More

58

378 Comments 692 Views



Comments

Hide

Most Relevant



AN INTERFAITH DISCUSSION STANDING UP TO RACISM MONDAY, OCTOBER 19 AT 7 PM

A Zoom event from the
Peninsula Multifaith Coalition
Speakers: Rev. Kristi Denham- UCC Pastor
April Vargas- Community Organizer
Kelly Yu & Alex Iliopoulou- Coalition Z,
a youth organization promoting
positive change
Moderator: Rabbi Corey Helfand

<https://pmc-standupto-racism.eventbrite.com>



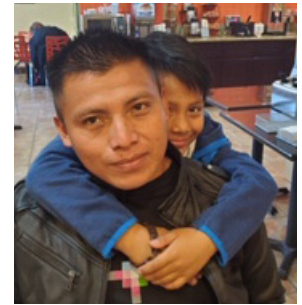
Racism still exists and plagues our streets on an everyday basis. It isn't going to stop overnight. What can you do?

This event will be an important avenue to listen to people sharing how they stand up to racism. Our speakers include members of the faith community and social change activists. After the presentation, you will have the opportunity to meet and share your thoughts in break out "rooms" with other participants. We will close with final thoughts by the moderator and panel.

Registration is free, but space is limited. So [please register](#) today!

Our Sanctuary Family

Folks in the congregation have been interested to know how David and Byron, our sanctuary family, are doing during the pandemic. While we al-



ways want to respect their privacy, as you might imagine, the hardships of the pandemic have been especially magnified for David and Byron. They arrived in San Mateo just a month and a half before sheltering in place. Byron had only 16 days in his 3rd grade classroom last spring before he began distance learning. When school resumed in August, Byron joined a learning hub at the MLK Center. He brings his school-issued Chromebook to the King Center to connect with his 4th grade teacher to do distance learning. He's charmed the staff with his sense of humor and does his best with his school work, but like many 10-year-olds he'd prefer to be playing Minecraft than attending school on Google Meet. He receives one hour of tutoring per week and twice a week he practices soccer skills in a program organized by the Police Activities League. He misses having real friends. There has been little known progress in immigration matters because the pandemic has slowed the process.

David helps Oscar with projects at CCSM and keeps in close contact with his family in Guatemala who are also experiencing the harsh effects of the pandemic.

Please continue to keep David and Byron in your prayers, and drop them a card to the church office when you think of it.

FAMILY DRAMA IN A PINE TREE

by Nancy Jalonen

Outside my bedroom window is a large pine tree, home to squirrels, wrens, blue jays, and, of course, that highly intelligent bird – crows. While their caws annoy people, thanks to ornithologist Jeannette Acherman's wonderful book *The Genius of Birds*, I'm aware that each caw communicates ideas in their language. This was illustrated recently when I heard an angry exchange between a female crow and her adolescent offspring, their beaks almost touching and their wings fluttering. Their Infuriated body and vocal language made me curious, when suddenly daddy appeared – identified by his glossy coat – and perched on the limb beside them. In one short caw in a deeper pitch, he stopped their argument, then hopped onto a slightly higher branch and looked down. The mother immediately hopped beside him and added an exclamation of her own, at which point the youngster sort of huddled down and was quiet. That resolved, the parents flew away, leaving their child to absorb the lesson.



Energy, Environmental Justice Ministry



2020 is, of course, the year of the Coronavirus – COVID 19. But 2020 is also a year of more extreme weather, including horrific wildfires in our home state, flooding and hurricanes elsewhere, all exacerbated by climate change. The response of CCSM to COVID-19 has been amazing on-line services and community outreach – all wonderful reactions to the impact of the virus. The response of CCSM to the impact of climate change and extreme weather is continued pro-active effort to go greener and reduce our carbon footprint starting with researching the benefits and cost of installing solar panels at CCSM.

The solar project being researched for consideration is a design of overhead solar panels installed in the parking lot with storage batteries, car charging stations and provision for limited use of power for our neighbors in case of emergency.

We are awaiting final specifications for a proposed system from American Microgrid Solutions, a consultant paid by an outside grant, while we are soliciting bids and cost estimates from several solar contractors. We are researching grants and incentives for solar conversion with various agencies and coordinating with the finance committee for funding. When we have a final design and cost estimates, we will initiate discussion with the congregation for input and feedback, expected later this fall.

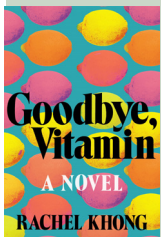
We are being guided by California Interfaith Power and Light, a non-profit whose mission is to educate and support congregations about environmental impact issues. We are also developing relationships with other congregations/ faith communities in the Bay Area around how they are addressing environmental justice issues, some of which include installing solar at their churches and synagogues. Stay tuned!

Rev. Dr. Penny Nixon has also been in relationship with Rev. Jim Antal, author of Climate Church/Climate World who will preach at our October 4 service. A service not to be missed!

FIRST TUESDAY BOOK GROUP

OCTOBER 6 & NOVEMBER 3 • 7:30PM

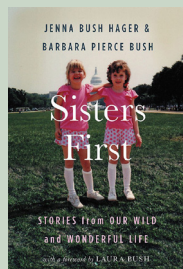
Welcome one and all to the new Zoom version of the First Tuesday Book Group.



On **October 6** we will discuss *Goodbye, Vitamin* by Rachel Khong. "Told in a diary format over the year that Ruth spends at home, *Goodbye, Vitamin* is a quietly brilliant disquisition on family relationships and adulthood, told in prose that is so startling in its spare beauty that I found myself thinking about Khong's turns of phrase for days

after I finished reading." —*The New York Times Book Review*

On **November 3** we'll discuss *Sisters First* by Jenna and Barbara Bush. "In this funny and heartfelt memoir, the twin daughters of President George W. Bush and First Lady Laura Bush offer their perspective on growing up in the public eye... Readers will be entertained by this charming, wild, and wonderful pair of life stories." —*Publishers Weekly*



"Deeply personal, emotional and often funny...—*People*

If you want to join us, send an email to s_stoehr@hotmail.com who will put you on the mail list for future announcements and invitations to the Zoom meetings. NO obligation... just an open invitation to join us.

Happy Reading!

IN THE SPIRIT OF SHARING

It has been my great pleasure to get to know the attendees of the Thursday evening "In the Spirit of Sharing" group. Throughout the eight weeks, we have shared our experience of connection to spirit. We have become more aware of what factors lead us closer to spirit and what leads us to feel less connected. In this "tool kit", we have found that busy-ness and watching too much news, for example, can lead to feeling disconnected. We found that practicing gratitude and visiting with loved ones can help us to feel more connected.

We listened to a variety of videos together. Kae Tempest's spoken word piece called "People's Faces," Br. David Stendhal-Rast's "A Good Day," a short piece on startling murmuration and others. We listened to writings by Frederick Buechner, Rabbi Amy Eilberg, Richard Rohr, Naomi Shihab Nye, Rumi, Naomi Rachel Remen, and many more. Together, we often found that if we began the group feeling somewhat disconnected, more often than not, at the end of the group we felt more connected.

I hope the group has been an antidote to the isolation and strangeness of our current situation. We are planning more sessions in the future. If you are interested to learn more, please contact Chase: cmontara@ccsm-ucc.org





12th Annual HOME & HOPE CONCERT SUNDAY OCTOBER 11, 2020 (ONLINE)

This year's Home and Hope Benefit Concert is titled "For God is My Hope" and will be held virtually. CCSM has submitted a choral video and other participating churches include St. Paul's Episcopal, First Presbyterian Church of Burlingame, St. Catherine's of Siena and San Bruno Church of the Latter Day Saints. There is no admission fee, however donations are welcome (information will be made available during the concert). There is also a special virtual mass choir work led by the St. Paul's choir; a couple CCSM members are participating in this very special work.

To register for this online event please go to:
homeandhope.net/choral-concert-12

If you have any questions about the event, please contact Lynnelle Bilsey at ltbmusings@gmail.com

CCSM SONGS OF THE DAY

I have to tell you, I never dreamed I would be creating these emails which are entering their 7th month. I've slowed to 3-5 offerings per week rather than daily, but I must admit how much I am enjoying this spiritual practice.



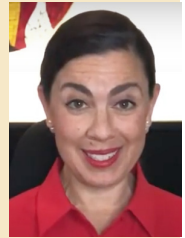
A little background about these posts: I have never considered myself much of a writer. Just before Shelter in Place started and I found myself grounded, so to speak, due to an ankle injury, a very dear friend challenged me to tackle a project which I had felt stymied and frustrated by—well wouldn't you know, I chose writing. She had me start by writing a stream of consciousness for ten minutes when she came over to help me with dinner—and a couple days later Shelter in Place happened. I sent my first email out following St. Patrick's day featuring some Irish music to bring a smile to everyone reeling from the news of SIP. Since then, the folks who receive these posts have grown beyond just the musicians at CCSM to include members and friends of our community.

The areas of musical focus have ranged from choral works to symphonic pieces, Broadway to jazz, Gospel to world music and a myriad of things in between as the spirit inspires me. These emails have been an amazing journey not only musically but spiritually, and have become an important connection to CCSM's blessed community. Thank you all for the wonderful conversations about the music and your thoughts about the posts. If you've missed any, CCSM has a "Songs of the Day" blog that contains all the emails in chronological order dating back to last March. You can find it here: tinyurl.com/Songs-of-the-Day

If you'd like to be added to the daily emails, please contact Lynnelle Bilsey at: ltbmusings@gmail.com.

CO-VO WORKSHOPS

CCSM has been invited to participate with Dr. Julia Nielsen in her Co-Vo workshops. These are wonderful vocal workshops to help promote good singing techniques and tune up your vocal chords. I've participated in a number of these workshops and Dr. Nielsen is not only knowledgeable, but delightful and engaging in her approach to these workshops. They happen **every Monday and Wednesday evening from 6 - 6:30 pm** and CCSM members are welcome to attend **FREE OF CHARGE**. To do so and receive the link to participate, please go to Dr. Nielsen's website to register for the class at co-vo.com. All are welcome.



REQUEST FOR MUSIC VIDEOS

I would like to make an open invitation for CCSM members and friends of all ages to **consider sharing a video featuring your music for our online services**. Solos, small ensembles, instrumentalists and vocalists are welcome. If you are interested in participating, please contact Lynnelle at ltbmusings@gmail.com.



Chancel Choir goofing around in 2008!

ZOOM MEETINGS FOR CHANCEL CHOIR AND BELLS

I don't have the dates set up quite yet, but will be sending out some meetings dates for choir and bells in October and November for Zoom check-ins. In addition, I am working on a choral Zoom where we can do some singing together (with the limitations of Zoom, of course). If you are on the Chancel Choir email group you'll get the information. If you're interested in participating with us on these meetings, we would love to have you join us. Please email me at ltbmusings@gmail.com, I'm happy to include you on the email.

VOLUNTEER(S) NEEDED FOR VIRTUAL CHOIR VIDEO

I am looking for a volunteer or two who are talented working with video and have experience working with technology to help CCSM create some virtual choir videos. If you are interested, I would love to connect with you to talk about CCSM's interest and what is entailed. Please email me at ltbmusings@gmail.com

An Exciting Fall in the Music Ministry!

By Angela Kraft Cross

All is very positive in the CCSM Organ Department! After a spring of extreme social distancing, and FaceTime/Zoom/Skype lessons on home electronic instruments, during the summer we figured out rituals by which our young organists could come, masked with one parent, and clean the organ's keyboards before and after each organist, thereby permitting in-person socially-distanced teaching and even better, video recording to participate in our church services! So far we have enjoyed hearing from Chase Olson, our organ scholar, and Isaiah Rassbach. Chase and Isaiah, in addition to Edward Lee and Ikenna Okpukpara, participated in Oberlin Conservatory's Zoom Organ Academy over the summer.



This fall are two milestone birthdays for favorite composers! On October 8, Louis Vierne, the blind organist at Notre Dame Cathedral turns 150 years old. In celebration, St Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco is holding a Vierne/Tournemire concert festival (Charles Tournemire also turned 150) and on August 9, Chase Olson performed the complete Vierne's Symphonie 1 in a livestreamed concert and on September 13, Angela similarly performed Vierne's Symphonie 2. On October 25, Angela will follow up with a concert featuring Vierne's Fantaisie pieces.

The second milestone birthday for the fall is the beloved composer, Ludwig van Beethoven, who turns 250 on December 16! We are in the midst of collecting piano sonata videos from favorite pianists Nataly Pak, Chase Olson, Ryan and Nathan Chi, Linda Mallette and Angela Kraft Cross. One of Nataly's virtuoso movements (Opus 26, Scherzo) was special music in church a week ago. We also anticipate a duet from Mary Ann Notz and Linda Mallette! Many of these Beethoven movements will be sprinkled through the church services of this fall as well as assembled into a few concerts to premiere as well! If anyone else would like to play/record any music by Beethoven to join our festival, you are most welcome! Please contact Angela Kraft Cross.



Both Beethoven and Vierne wrote music that reflected their challenging times. Their insightful compositions are apropos for the struggles we face today.

The young organists and I are also busy preparing for the 7th annual CCSM Halloween organ concert which will premiere as a video on Friday October 30. The program will feature favorites Count Chasula (Chase Olson), Cornopean Cat (Nataly Pak), JS RassBach (Isaiah Rassbach), Houdini of the Harmonium (Nathan Chi), The Green Reaper (Edward Lee) and Phantom of the Casavant (Angela Kraft Cross). Special guest will be Tim Warncke (13) from Piedmont, student of Bill Vaughan, who will submit his video from Germany where his family is spending their fall. Watch for the link to the online performance in CCSM Connections and Sunday bulletins.

A huge thanks to Robert Cross who has put together all the organ videos and is recording many of the Beethoven performances.

Please enjoy all these wonderful musical offerings!

A LABOR OF LOVE

At the beginning of the pandemic, a group of ladies, members and non-members of CCSM, joined together to create the CCSM Mask Brigade. Our goal is to provide masks to people in our community who need them to stay safe during this difficult time. We have been fortunate to receive donations of fabric, elastic, and other supplies we need to make the masks. The recipients of our masks include: Samaritan House Free Medical Clinic, Samaritan House distribution center, Sleeping Safe in San Francisco, Puente on the coast and of course, members of CCSM who need one. The group has become very cohesive and we all agree it gives each of us a feeling of sharing love with others by making these masks that we are doing God's work.



If you would like to join us or have fabric to donate, please contact Genel Morgan or Jennifer Jacoby-Yeh.

The Mask Brigade made a quilt for one of their members

What's Happening at 225 Tilton

By Chase Montara

The church building itself remains essentially closed. I am in my office Monday through Thursday, and am available from 9:00-3:00 most days. Keep in mind that there is no one to cover the front desk, so if I have to step away to work with a contractor or to guide a delivery, there is no one in the Main Office to open the door or answer phones. That is why I don't claim regular office hours. For that reason, it is important to call first before you come to the church and arrange a time. This also allows for traffic management, to space appointments apart, in order to keep everyone as safe as possible. There is activity here at the church, so people do come and go (such as Liturgical Arts, the musicians, videographers, contractors, etc.), but we do try and limit the volume of visits for safety reasons.

The church telephone rolls over to my cell phone, so please feel free to call anytime: 650-343-3694. Thanks to all for helping the staff stay COVID-free.

225 TILTON HAS BEEN WITHOUT GAS SERVICE FOR 2+ WEEKS!

On a routine check, PG & E found a gas leak and shut off service to the church. On further assessment, the leak was found to involve the line between the church and the CE building, as well as 170 feet of gas line from the meter to the main furnace. Four contractors were summoned to give estimates and after emergency meetings with the Finance Committee, we chose Bell Plumbing to do the repairs. Bell started on September 24. The first order of business is to restore gas service to the two apartments upstairs, as the occupants have been without hot water for over two weeks.

Thank you to Oscar Rosa, who oversaw the initial assessment and provided info to the contractors who came to bid, and guidance to me as I navigated this process. Thank you to Veril Phillips, Jim Lindsay, Jim Granucci and the rest of the Finance Committee who met on several occasions to review and approve the bids. Thank you also to Oscar's family, and to David and Byron who have had to endure cold showers. (We offered hotels as an alternative, but the offer was declined.) Appreciation also to PG & E for finding the leak, which was truly a blessing!



Christopher Yeh

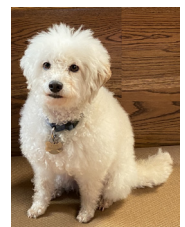


Christopher Yeh

ALL IS WELL WITH THE OAK TREES IN THE MEMORIAL GARDEN

Penny and I often take Mavis and Sheba out into the Memorial Garden for a little play and fresh air. All seemed well and then one morning, Penny looked out her window and saw that caterpillars were floating on webs from the tree limbs. Thousands of caterpillars! We found that most of one tree's leaves, and 40% of the other tree's leaves were dead. It seems that this happened almost overnight.

Roberto Guzman, an arborist and tree surgeon, came to inspect the trees and prescribed a state-of-the-art injection treatment for both trees. 20 plugs were inserted into the base of each tree and a series of two injections were given. Within weeks, the trees had leafed out again and all is well! Roberto discovered that the front tree required surgery to repair previous prunings, which had left the trunk open to an influx of water. He and his crew came with chainsaws and widened the wounds, removed the dead wood, and sealed them. The trees need pruning, as they are overhanging 120 S. San Mateo Drive, but this will have to wait until the spring, so as not to further stress the trees. Roberto assures us that both trees will survive for many more years.



Chris Yeh managed to take beautiful photos of the Memorial Garden recently, even while the trees were blighted.

STEWARDSHIP 2021: KEEPING FAITH

If you've been able to join in CCSM's online worship recently, you've heard moving testimonies from all different kinds of people in the congregation about what CCSM has meant to them during this pandemic.

Last year's stewardship theme was *Faith in Our Future*. None of us could have imagined how much we would need that faith! And we will continue to **Keep Faith** during the weeks and months ahead. CCSM will continue to show up and be a steady, sustaining and faithful presence in our lives.

Our online services have been a source of hope and inspiration to many during the last six months and our "virtual congregation" has grown significantly. Nothing can replace gathering in person, but the online services have been a gift and enabled many people to connect who otherwise wouldn't be able to attend.

One CCSM member said: *I cannot verbalize adequately what CCSM, Sunday service and all of the activities I have participated in mean to me. CCSM has been my anchor in these very hard times.*

Even when we are able to be back together, we will continue broadcasting every week. We want to be sure to include everyone!

We started this year's stewardship drive early because we wanted to build a solid foundation moving into 2021



when so much else feels uncertain. The board of directors and finance committee is keeping our budget the same as 2020. We are striving for 230 pledging households, including 30 new pledgers from our "virtual" congregation.

We have made it easy to make a pledge online from [the Stewardship page on our website](#) or simply call or email our CCSM bookkeeper, Cheryle Matteo, at cmatteo@ccsm-ucc.org, 650-343-3694 to renew your pledge from last year or make a new pledge.

You are an amazing and generous congregation. The ways you have shown up during the last six months have been so inspiring to me. I have complete confidence that we will remain a beacon of hope in the days ahead and continue to be God's hands and feet, because of you.

Thank you for KEEPING FAITH!

Peace,
Penny

WHAT CCSM MEANS TO ME

FROM CHERYLE MATTEO, CCSM BOOKKEEPER: I have been connected with many boards in my 30+ years in finance and this place is special in the way each voice is heard and each strength is applauded. Believe me, that is not a given on a corporate board or even in some nonprofits. I am so impressed by the amount of energy, kindness, respect, and hours the Board puts into our church. It is evident how much they care for the church and each other. Together, we ensure that this place will live on and that Jesus is a huge part of the compassion in everyone's hearts.

FROM CCSM MEMBER PAM MCCARTHY: For me, CCSM has provided a steady normalcy over the past six months. Going to church every Sunday at 10:30... same as "normal times" has been comforting, supportive and healing. I have found strength from the sermons. Penny's intuitive sense and faith definitely guides her—she always knows what we need to hear!

I love the creativity that has been woven into the services... the music, the poems, art as well as people sharing their experiences.

I love that we can still submit prayers since I have found that prayers from the Congregational Church of San Mateo are heard and so many people recover and end up in a better place as a result.

The notes as well as the lovely bouquets of flowers I received made me feel special... something we all need during this time more than ever.

Thank you CCSM!



Click [HERE](#) or on the video to hear more CCSM members talk about what this church community means to them.

DEAR SISTERS AND BROTHERS,

It was such a blessing for me to be able to connect with all of you during the Sunday I preached. I miss being able to connect in person, as I know you miss being together as a faith community; so I am grateful to be able to connect with you all in any way. At the same time, we continue to be encouraged to exercise caution by staying at home as much as possible.

Meanwhile, we are surrounded by grief, anxiety, and loneliness. Many of us are having trouble continuing our spiritual growth when our routines have been upended and we live mostly in isolation. We've been at this for months. It is difficult, frustrating and sometimes disheartening. I don't know about you, but it seems that restrictions are lifted, then reinstated. We move ahead a phase, only to return days later.

While these have been challenging times for us, I believe that in the storm, God's light shines, illuminating a path forward—

As the struggles last longer than we expected, we must continue to care for our neighbors, support each other, and check in with one another. In this way, we "run with perseverance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

Now, for an update of our Spanish on-line services on Wednesdays. The past few weeks have brought great joy to me when I see some of you from the Sunday service join worship on Wednesday. Some of you even commented and engaged with the community on Facebook chat. I can't even begin to express how much that means to me, so thank you for engaging in the Wednesday services. I hope to see more of you there. We have also experienced new visitors who have become part of the faith community on Wednesdays, most of whom are joining from Central America and Mexico—which is incredible. What has happened, as you may guess, is that since we are online, many of the families who live in San Mateo and attend our church but still have family in their home countries have invited their family members to join our online services on Wednesdays. This means we have a presence in countries such as El Salvador, Honduras, and Panama now. This is exciting for me and I hope we can continue to reach more people.

While these have been challenging times for us, I believe that in the storm, God's light shines, illuminating a path forward for ourselves and our congregation. My hope and prayer for us all is that beyond the pandemic, we may discover new pathways of ministry and spirituality as we continue to be attentive to God's vision in this time of crisis.

Peace and blessings!

Jorge



Chase shared this photo of Jorge offering "virtual" communion

FOOD GIVEAWAY AT CCSM

On Saturday, September 19, 25 bags of food were distributed at CCSM to members of the congregation and others in the area who have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. CCSM now has a relationship with BiRite Food Distributors. In order to stretch the General Relief Fund, groceries will be purchased at wholesale prices every two weeks, and distributed to those in need. Volunteers: Pablo Quintanilla, Annlee McGurk, Fred Kerwood. And thanks to Oscar and Imelda for bagging the groceries and to Chase for ordering!

If you would like to donate grocery bags for this project, please contact Chase: cmontara@CCSM-ucc.org.



100 YEARS LATER...

Our August Sermon Series, 100 Years Later, looked back on some of the historical milestones of a century ago—including a pandemic, racial upheaval, women's suffrage, war, and economic crisis... many topics with modern-day counterparts. Civil rights hero John Lewis passed away as she was preparing the content and his motto, "Good Trouble," found resonance throughout the series. Towards the end of the series, as a massive lightning storm ignited dozens of fires across our state, the orange sky seemed to underscore the urgent, historic milestones happening in our own time.



- August 2:** 1917: *One Hundred Years Later—World War I*
- August 9:** 1918: *Spiritual Wisdom from the Spanish Influenza*
- August 16:** 1919: *League of Nations, Prohibition and the birth of Christian Fundamentalism*
- August 23:** 1920: *The Vote!*
- August 30:** *What will the 2020s be called in 100 years?*

[HERE IS A HIGHLIGHT FROM PENNY'S AUGUST 24 CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER DURING THAT SERIES:](#)

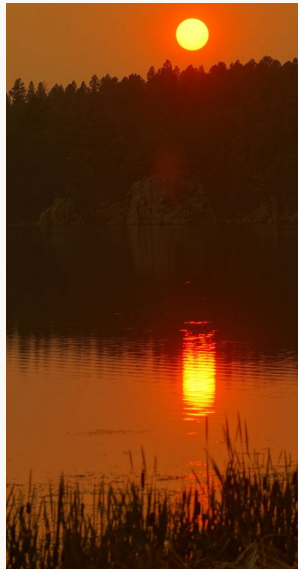
Dear friends,

Seems like every conversation I've had over the past week has included something like, "It's downright apocalyptic!" or "I'm waiting for it to start raining frogs!" or "How much more can we take?"

Whether you said something like that aloud, I imagine most of us are feeling like this is all too much. The stories from the local news of so many displaced by fires are heart-wrenching. A number of people connected to our congregation have had to evacuate and wait, hour by hour, to hear the news of whether their homes and belongings escaped the fires. We are running out of resources, both physical and emotional.

This is a time when we need to dig deep within ourselves and when we need to deeply care for one another and be engaged in whatever way we can. This past Sunday we talked about 1920 and the suffrage movement. This coming Sunday I was going to talk about the roaring twenties, but instead, I want to focus on the here and now- what will end up calling the 20's of this century? The resilient twenties? We certainly need some resiliency right now. We need some staying power. We need some encouragement.

We need some faith. It will come to us in different ways. The psalmist says: I will lift up my eyes to the hills; where does my help come from? My help comes from God, present in heaven and earth. We need some hope. And it will come to us in unexpected moments.



Hope

It hovers in dark corners
before the lights are turned on,
it shakes sleep from its eyes
and drops from mushroom gills,
it explodes in the starry heads
of dandelions turned sages,
it sticks to the wings of green angels
that sail from the tops of maples.

It sprouts in each occluded eye
of the many-eyed potato,
it lives in each earthworm segment
surviving cruelty,
it is the motion that runs the tail of a dog,
it is the mouth that inflates the lungs
of the child that has just been born.

It is the singular gift
we cannot destroy in ourselves,
the argument that refutes death,
the genius that invents the future,
all we know of God.

It is the serum which makes us swear
not to betray one another;
it is in this poem, trying to speak.

~ Lisel Mueller

We need each other. Reach out. Connect online on Sundays. Pray for one another.

Love,
Penny

Joys and Concerns

CCSM Pastoral Care Team

Please share your prayers with the pastoral care team: Rev. Dr. Penny Nixon, Rev. Jorge Bautista, and Rev. Sheryl Johnson. You are invited to share your prayers, your hopes, and your lives. You may connect in the following ways: by **filling out a ccsm-ucc.org/prayer online prayer request**, by **contacting us via staff emails** listed in your bulletin or on the website, ccsm-ucc.org. You may also contact the church office at cmontara@ccsm-ucc.org or call 650-343-3694, and Chase will make sure one of the pastors contacts you as soon as possible.

PRAYERS OF GRATITUDE

Prayers of joy for the marriage of **Kristin Skromme and Gregory O'Hara** on Sept. 13. They were married in Truckee, CA outdoors with immediate family attending.

John McCann thanks everyone for their prayers. His mother, **Deborah**, is cancer-free after undergoing radiation treatment.

PRAYERS OF LOVE AND STRENGTH

Prayers for the family of **Barbara Jane Ruthroff Gates**, mother of **Don Ruthroff**. In the evening of September 26, 2020 Barbara completed a week-long transitional journey from her walk here on earth and she was reunited with the love of her life Jim just forty years to the day that she lost him. She had made nearly ninety-six journeys around the sun. Don and Jonathan were able to visit her and say their goodbyes. Don describes her as an open-hearted woman of deep faith who truly lived the gospel.

David Meissner's Uncle Al passed from COVID on September 19. Prayers for David, Al's wife **Arlene**, and their children.

Prayers for **Jelle Zijlstra** as he travels to Holland on the sad occasion of his mother's passing. His dad is in hospital with a heart condition and was not able to be with his wife at her passing.

Prayers of comfort for **Eddy Xu** and family on the passing of Eddy's grandmother **Ng, Pui Chun** on August 31 in New York. Eddy was able to travel there to be with the family.

Stan Higgs' brother, **Chester Higgs**, passed away on August 19 at age 88. Please pray with Stan for Chester's wife and 3 children, as they mourn this loss.

Prayers for the loved ones of **Adrienne Mitchell**, longtime CCSM member who had been ill for many years, who passed away on August 12. An intimate service with close friends was held at Cypress Lawn on August 26.

Karen Jolliffe passed away peacefully at home on August 5th. Prayers of comfort for her partner **Phil Gara** and all who loved her. She will be missed dearly. A memorial service will be held at CCSM when it is safe to get back together.

Prayers for **Robin Hansen** on the loss of her mother Mary, who passed away on August 6th. Robin and Rolf were able to visit her and spend time with her.

Prayers of comfort for **Rosemarie Pero** on the loss of her dear family friend **Mrs. Delgado** who passed away on August 3rd.

Mary Jane Cooper, Chris Cooper's mother and **Haywood Cooper's** grandmother, passed away on July 27. Prayers for the entire extended family as they grieve her loss.

Ginny Lesak Jakoubek asks for prayers for the family of her cousin **Debi Smith Simpson** who died in July after a fall and a stroke.

PRAYERS OF HEALING

Prayers for **Beth's** parents **Sharon and Kelly Thurman** who both have COVID, and are in critical care. Beth is a dear friend of **Martha Bronitsky**.

Michele Merfeld Hale, friend of **Brenda Kelley** and new online participant from Missouri asks for prayer for her nephew's child **Trey**, born in February and undergoing treatment for leukemia. Also for her college roommate **Catherine** in Fresno, who is receiving treatment for ovarian cancer.

Sharon Tobin asks for renewed prayers for family friend **Lindsay Donovan**, 37-year-old mom of a 2-year-old who is dealing with stage-4 pancreatic cancer, and has had some recent difficult developments.

Mel Thrash's second surgery on August 17th was very successful and he is home recovering. Please pray for strength and continued healing.

Lynnelle Bilsey underwent ankle fusion surgery on August 26. She very much appreciates all the outpouring of support. Prayers as she continues to recover at home.

Prayers of safety and peace for ALL the **victims of the fires** in California and Oregon and beyond. Many have lost their homes and belongings. Prayers of gratitude that **Gail Evans** as well as **Joliene and Caleb Gatlin** were able to return home after evacuation.

Prayers for **Linda Stoick's** friend **Denise**, who is facing a rare type of cancer. And for **Alexa**, who is also battling cancer. She also asks for prayers for her nephew and his wife.

George Parker is living at his home on Lexington Way in Burlingame and is in hospice care. He would love it if you would like to come by the house and wave through the window! (His bed is situated in the living room in front of the picture window on the ground floor). Morning hours would probably be best as he tends to nap in the



George and Cari Parker together recently

afternoon. **Cari Parker** has been living with **Julie Berk** and her partner **Bill** in Redwood City. **Laura Peterhans** is coordinating the schedule for visits.

Prayers for **Sue Hill**, as she continues to recover from chemotherapy after-effects.

James Tobias (Lynnelle's friend) had a setback with his cancer—prayers for strength and healing.

Joys and Concerns cont.

Prayers for **David Meissner** as he works with his Parkinson's care team at UCSF to better understand and hopefully mediate recent changes in his memory. Prayers also for both David and **Gene** as they face this challenge together through the foundation of their love for God and each other.

Prayers for **Chuck Ruthroff**, brother of **Don Ruthroff**, in the midst of immunotherapy for squamous cell carcinoma (head and neck cancer), adrenal insufficiency, and encephalopathy (brain disease).

Continued prayers for **Kirsten Smith's** father **David Riding** who has Lewy body dementia, and for Kirsten's father-in-law, **Paul Smith**, at home

with round-the-clock care.

Prayers of peace and strength to **Ruth Black** and family as Ruth is on hospice at Brookdale Assisted Living with MS and dementia.

Bill Melis is struggling with a number of health issues so is at home and appreciates prayers for continued healing.

Prayers of healing for beloved choir member **Lori Bush Shepard**, who moved to Chicago last year; she had a difficult surgery on 8/19 and is now recovering. And gratitude that she reported that all her margins are clear and she has no need of chemo!

Cristina Summerville asks for

prayers for her brother, **Gabriel**, who is having prostate issues.

Michele Moffitt suffered a stroke in July and continues to recover well. She also asks for prayers for her brother who has cancer.

Continuing prayers of strength and healing for our beloved brothers and sisters: **Martha Grannis, Dr. Jim Groundwater** and family, **Bill Daniels, Marjorie Griffin, Thelma Kromhout, Rev. Travis Woodmansee's** mother **Cathy, Mike and Kay Harris'** friend **Mary Helen McMahon, Cathy Latta, Dottie Scott, Veril Phillips'** granddaughter **Eva**, and others as they walk their unique journeys with cancer and other health challenges.

ENCOURAGING ALL TO VOTE

MSJ is supporting three organizations that are asking us to write letters or postcards to voters in swing states, supporting either Democratic candidates or encouraging voters to register and vote. [Flip the West](#), [Sister District](#) and [Swing Left](#) all provide the writer with instructions and a script and give you names and addresses to mail the completed letters or postcards to. These are national organizations targeting swing states where voters can really make a difference in this important election. Anyone interested can click the links above or reach out to Carole Wilson or Genel Morgan for details. This is time sensitive, however, as early voting has already started in some states. The organizations are asking that the correspondence be mailed by the end of September, so if you are interested in assisting with this effort, don't delay!

THE CAM (CALLING ALL MEMBERS) TEAM CONTINUES TO REACH OUT

Many thanks to the dedicated members of the CAM team who continue to reach out to church members who may feel isolated during the church closure. Members are assigned a list of 10-15 members, and they reach out to them at varying intervals, depending upon need. In this way, we are able to keep in touch, be apprised of changes in health and address, determine needs for pastoral care or groceries, and to keep a finger on the pulse of the congregation during this time of building closure.

In addition, there are about 20 church members who receive hard copies of the Bulletin each week. And a similar number who receive hard copies of the PINE TREE. If you are not receiving calls and would like to, or if you would like to receive a copy of the Bulletin or PINE TREE (both of which are available online), please call the church office at 650-343-3694 or email Chase: cmontara@casm-ucc.org.



THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY: TIME IS RUNNING OUT

SAT., OCTOBER 10 • 7:00-8:00PM • ZOOM

Join Gary H. White for a special presentation as part of the Climate Reality Project campaign, **24 Hours of Reality: Countdown to the Future**. To attend, [click here for the Zoom link](#) between 6:45-7:00 PM to join us.



Climate change is happening faster than ever. The impacts, from intense hurricanes to massive wildfires in the west, are now more profound and close at hand. If appropriate action is not taken this decade, we are destined to live in an increasingly uninhabitable world.

We'll discuss the basic science of climate change, the deepening impacts of the crisis happening around the world, as well as some solutions to this existential problem. Along with outlining steps individuals can take, we'll highlight the collective actions climate organization—from the youth-led Fridays for Future to the civil disobedient rebels of Extinction Rebellion—are taking. Join us!



We made this memorial altar in memory of Karen Jolliffe as we watched the 10:30 service as a family. —Melanie Dresbach

This is our third Pine Tree during COVID and we hope you find something within to lift your spirits and give you a sense of the warm CCSM community we are part of even when we can't be together in person.

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Meet Laura Keating, PSR Intern



I am a third-year Master's of Divinity student at Pacific School of Religion. Originally born and raised in West Virginia, I moved to Montana in 2015 after college to serve in Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest. During that year I discovered the UCC and heard my calling to ministry for the first time. My focus in seminary is on Feminist Church Planting. I'm seeking ordination in the UCC and hope to be a part of the start of a new church/ministry after graduating.

At CCSM, I'll help lead the high school youth program as well as the church's "virtual congregation" for new members. My hobbies include horseback riding, music, cooking, and hanging out with my husband. I'm so thankful for the opportunity to intern at CCSM and I'm looking forward to learning alongside a community that has already proven itself to be filled with love, grace, and wisdom.

Can't wait for the journey ahead!

Laura



Liturgical Arts Ministry's altars have been so dynamic and creative. Here's one for Genesis' story of the flood